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Ontario Women's Directorate



# NEWS RELEASE

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## McGUINTY GOVERNMENT CREATES NEW AWARD TO HONOUR GIRLS WHO ARE COMMUNITY LEADERS

***"Leading Girls, Building Communities" Award Recognizes Exceptional Leadership***

**TORONTO** –The McGuinty government is launching a new provincial award called "Leading Girls, Building Communities" to recognize the contributions of young girls in communities across Ontario, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello announced today.

"We are launching this award today in celebration of International Women's Day, which is a global day to inspire and celebrate the accomplishments of women and girls," said Minister Pupatello. "Recognizing young women's contributions in Ontario is a perfect way both to celebrate this day and to empower our young women to become the leaders of tomorrow."

The award recognizes young women, aged 18 years and under, who demonstrate exceptional leadership to improve the lives of others and champion issues that lead to positive social change in their schools, communities or province. MPPs are invited to nominate young women for the award from their ridings. The award recipients will receive a Certificate of Recognition from the Government of Ontario.

"I am pleased that our government has launched this award to recognize exceptional girls doing exceptional work in our communities," said Parliamentary Assistant to Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and MPP for London North Centre Deb Matthews. "The award is a great way to encourage young women to continue their good works and leadership into adulthood, and to inspire other young women to make a positive difference."

Award recipients will include young women who:

1. Encourage others to tackle non-traditional challenges and careers and to break down barriers to success
2. Champion issues that contribute to positive social change, including equity, inclusion, diversity, reduction of discrimination, involvement in the political process, and violence-free initiatives
3. Are a positive role model by providing leadership, guidance, mentoring, and/or coaching to others.

Other government initiatives that recognize and empower Ontario girls include:

1. Sport and Empowerment of Females provincial conference, which brought together leaders from all parts of the community to share ideas on how to engage and empower women and girls through sport
2. Equality Rules public education campaign, which teaches youth ages eight to 14 about healthy, equal and respectful relationships to help break the cycle of violence before it starts. For more info, visit www.equalityrules.ca.

"Key to building strong, safe communities is encouraging Ontarians to participate in making their communities a great place to live," commented Pupatello. "I look forward to giving out the award to its first recipients so that they can serve as role models and inspirations to girls across the province."

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